

Son of Pro Wrestling Sushi^{#12}

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Hello, everyone!

Welcome to the "resurrection" of Pro Wrestling Sushi. Hey, if God and Vince McMahon can do it, so can we!

Actually, we did it last year, when this little bucket of crab legs and scrod came back as the "Son of"... a rasslin' Messiah of sorts, bobbered up from the deep to save your pile-driven souls while spreading the "word" from Sushiland (as compared to spreading the "word" from Campbell-by-the-Sea!).

And just like Mark Calloway, who will return from Pro Wrestling Heaven, either redeemed or blessed with a more "angelic" gimmick (The White Angel?), this sheet comes to you with a new look, too, sort of, since it's going to take the better part of a year to figure out exactly how to make this new computer sing--like a member of the choir!

Hey, I'm a slow learner and, unlike some brothers of the wrestling gospel who don't have *real* day jobs (and who are able to put out weekly "bibles" about this sport), this fishy-friar is lucky if he can cast his small packages of brass-knuckled bread upon suplexed waters whenever he can.

Which is how often this sheet comes out, for \$1 & the SASE- stips noted above (\$2.50 & no SASE's for overseas.) The red hieroglyphics on your envelope reflect the number of Earthly issues you have left.

Now, what say ye we get this little shrimp-sized mat crusader on the road to pro wrestling Nirvana!

Baton Rouge Clash!

Was the crowd at WCW's 1/27 Baton Rouge CLASH primed for the "surprise" appearance by Bobby Heenan? The way those Mardi Gras-

minded southern-fried folks popped for The Brain, you'd think King Baccus himself had arrived from New Orleans and told everyone the State of Louisiana's annual drinking 'n' screwing fest would begin a week early this year!

Tells you something, though, regarding the response to Heenan. That most of the audience hasn't been watching only WCW wrestling shows when they're home eating hush-puppies and catfish.

Wonder how a WWF crowd would have popped if Todd Pettingill (in Okerlund's boots) told them the bad news he just received--"Worse than my mother-in-law coming to live with me!"--that Tony Schiavone was in the building?! Do the sounds of cheers in a vacuum or one hand clapping come to mind? Probably not a fair comparison.

"TBS...The Brain Station?" I like it.

I also liked Heenan's topically flavored Tonya Harding-esque threat and comeback to Okerlund that if Mean Gene didn't watch his mouth, Heenan would take a crowbar to his kneecaps.

Let me tell you, if that situation were to develop--a crowbar match between Brain and Mean--it might be more fun than putting a chicken head on Col. Rob Parker, and it might even be worth the bucks if it were on PPV (if you're the kind of grappling fan who likes his wrestling to be more like oversized actors doing Broadway productions where you really have to suspend a LOT of belief versus if you like your pro graps to be more realistic where you only have to suspend a LITTLE bit of belief. Hey, am I beginning to sound like Meltzer here?)

Tonya vs Nancy

Maybe the wrestling-way is how Tonya Harding and Nancy

Kerrigan should settle their feud. The day before the Winter Olympics at Lillehammer, arm 'em both with skates, crowbars, and chicken helmets. Lower a big cage onto the ice. Place a ladder in the middle and have Harding's former husband-valet Jeff Gillooly sit on top of the ladder. First skater to climb to the top of the ladder gets to kah-blooey Gillooly!

The Four Icemen

How come when pro wrestlers like Sting get jumped in parking lots or kicked in the head with cowboy boots or attacked by big "butchers" who are hiding in big wooden boxes or get salt thrown into their eyes during championship matches in front of the whole world, or get their heads stuffed into plastic garbage bags (or get attacked in hotel lobbies and tattooed with scissors), we're lucky if USA TODAY runs the news on the national weather page? But a skater gets her caps tapped by the Four Icemen (Hitman, Body Guard, Ex-Hubby, and Skater) and the world press corps drops whatever it's doing in Bosnia-Hertzgovina, Russia, and Washington, D.C., and bee-lines for Portland, Oregon faster than Gordon Solie can say "a possible pinning situation!"

Missy

No wonder Missy Hyatt cut her hair short and looked a little pissed when she led the Nasty Boys into the arena. I'd be po'd, too, if (after all the abuse I'd taken in my line of work as a manager-valet) two prima donna ice skaters were getting all the focus and sympathy for a run-in that Miss Really Large Mouth & Rubber Lips does as part of her job each week. But then, maybe Missy is still miffed that the moral turpitude clause in her WCW contract will not allow her to pose nude in PLAYBOY.

I mean, if Missy Hyatt posed nude in PLAYBOY it's not

exactly going to corrupt the turpitudes of the 9-12 year old WCW male demographic, seeing as how, I think, you've still got to be at least eighteen in most states to buy a magazine that would show only slightly more of Missy's anatomy than we've already seen on a ream of Saturday Nights, CLASHES, and PPV's. Gotta admit, though. The thought of Missy Hyatt and her Twin Monster Turbos--and a centerfold of her showing what only her gynecologist, Eddie Gilbert, certain NFL and NHL teams, Jason Hervey, Hawk, and midjets peeking through knot holes, etc. have allegedly seen--might be worth the sawbuck, unless, of course, after all that wear and tear, were talking The Black Hole of Calcutta! Somehow, I bet Jane Fonda veto'd Missy's--and our--big moment. (Thanks, Jane--as if you never flashed a bit of nippolina during your career.)

Yeah, Harding and Kerrigan. Harding wrestling in the Medusa role? Kerrigan as Wendi Richter? THE WAR TO SETTLE THE SCORE!? Be-e-e-e there!

SUSHI NEWS FLASH!

Yucca Flats, New Mexico --

Sushi News Service (SNS) has just learned that, whereas pro wrestling's "Cactus" Jack Saguario's new baby daughter, "Jumping" Cholla Saguario, survived a dangerous fall from a ten-story building here, her mother "Ocotillo" Jill Saguario, was jailed briefly for tossing the newborn child out the window of this same ten-story building.

Mrs. Saguario, who was later released on her own recognizance, explained to the Yucca Flats, NM police that the incident was simply an old Saguario family pro wrestling ritual where Saguario off-spring are "tested" for resiliency (and their ability to "walk away" after

taking nasty bumps on cement surfaces) by catapulting them out of hospital windows only moments after they are born.

"Don't all families to this?" asked Cactus Jack's wife, who was told by authorities that she and her husband might want to reconsider another family tradition where, when the kids reach one years of age, they are taken to Disneyland and tied to the tracks in Space Mountain.

Scorpio & Marcus

You've heard the old saw about when two people, usually a husband and his wife, or a dog owner and his dog, have been together a long time and they start looking a lot alike.

Well, when Too Cold Scorpio and Marcus Alexander Bagwell came out from behind the curtains and started walking down the ramp toward their match with Paula & Pauline, did anyone else have a hard time telling which one was chocolate pudding and which one was from the center of an Oreo cookie? Bagwell for "Man with the Tan" of the Year Award. We are talking a dermatologist's wet dream here Sports-E fans...as in thousand of dollars of skin cancer therapy. We're talking darker than Hulk Hogan's prime. Unless someone put bootblack in Bagwell's body oil jar. (Wouldn't it be something if, in the final analysis, steroids abuse and dangerous moves over the top rope didn't kill off all the wrestlers, but that they were done in my too many hours lounging around hotel swimming pools on sunny days trying to get that certain look?)

At first, when Paul Orndorff was loading up his knee-pad near the end of the match, I couldn't figure out what he was doing, the way he was leaning over at a 30-degree angle. It looked like he was either trying to hump the Masked Assassin's head or he had discovered a new way to nap during a tag match. Did Fatty Acid, I mean, did the Masked Assassin dig into his coat pocket again and slip something to Orndorff? I couldn't tell. All of a

sudden Paul Roma's head was saying "Hello" to Paula's knee and it was lights out, and the Too Tan Homeboys were to get a shot at the Nasties on the Saturday evening TBS show.

Got to hand it to the Eric Bischoff regime, though. WCW reportedly taking the big pencil away from Dusty and stuffing him where the moon don't shine and putting Orndorff-Roma and Scorpio-Bagwell in matching trunks and tights all in the span (dex?) of one week. It does have a professional look about it. Wonder how long the new booking committee will last...before someone gets upset and they start cutting each other up...with scissors.

I really like the work ethic of Orndorff. Here he was once at the top of the heap (him versus Hogan in the mid-80's), and here he is now, whacked-out arm and all, and he's out there working and selling for the stars of tomorrow. Match was a good one for straight grappling (**1/2) and even with the myserious screw-job ending (-*) it was a nice, attention-getting opening bout.

Spit Wads

For some reason (I really don't know why) I r-e-a-l-l-y liked the "Teacher vs Student" match between "The Tutor" Ron Simmons and Ice Train "The Tuttee". I personally think education in our great nation--as well as the needs of youth in America--would be much better served if every year school teachers were allowed to meet one of their "favorite" students in the ring for a little catch as catch can. Nothing too brutal. Just anything goes. No stopping for blood. Straps. Weapons. Exploding chalk dust. Spit wads. Backward ball caps. Losers don't get recess for a year!

I'm not serious, of course. Why would I want to deprive the President of the United States and Congress from creating train loads of future occupants for all the new jails they're gonna have to build when "Three Strikes & You're Out" goes into effect? Match was at least (one-half a *)

because it was over real quick, and one-half a DUD, because Ron Simmons did nothing to show that he really cared. In fact, I'm surprised Simmons was not the first wrestler in history to fall asleep from boredom while pinning an opponent. Jeez. How would you like to be in Simon's boots. Your glory years were in college and now, at 34, you're doing filler. In both the year-end polls by Keller and Meltzer, I voted Mable of Men on a Mission as the "Most Embarrassing" wrestler of the year. Not that I want to bestow that honor upon Ice Train, but after watching him and Simmons work up a dry sweat, I think I voted for the wrong team. Wonder if Dave (or Wade) will allow a long time reader, a fellow wrestling journalist, and a good, loyal friend to change his vote? SEGA!!!

Comedy Channel

Just when I thought I was watching a pro rasslin' show (Hey, weren't those two of the quickest hours of WCW in a long time?), suddenly there was Stunning Steve Austin and Col. Rob Parker on the "comedy channel" with The Stunner doing a Double-Putrid hankerchief-waving imitation of a pro wrestling manager-colonel from Memphis, and The Robster doing a hilarious "I Rule the World" T-shirt wearing 'n' tearing parody of both Hulk Hogan and Sid Vicious. I don't know about anyone else, but I started laughing and laughing during their interview (and especially during the beginning of their match when Parker did the Hogan-Vicious parody) until the new WCW Commish was intro'd.

Bockwinkle

Talk about the term "Out of Sight, Out of Mind."

Nick Bockwinkle, at one time, was one of my favorite workers. The fans in Baytone Rooj never heard of him. No reaction, as Meltzer might say, when he was introduced by Okerlund. I always feel sort of bad for a legend when that happens, when he is introduced and a big noisy crowd suddenly

grows quiet. That, of course, presupposes that anyone in the building is really listening to anything, anyway. Actually, I'll bet if they played Hulk Hogan's entrance music or the Theme from Rocky, everyone would have gone crazy and wouldn't have known the difference. I guess someone like Bockwinkle understands it, though. But it still makes me feel like I'm wearing itchy long johns whenever it happens and the crowd breaks out in sudden silence. (What if, when Bill Clinton was introduced for his State of the Union speech, instead of lengthy applause and cheering, it was so quiet you could hear a pair of nipple clamps fall to the floor in the balcony as Rush Limbaugh cuts a fart while bending over to pick them up?) Then again, maybe the mic wasn't hot outside the interview platform when Nick was introduced. Or maybe it was. Am I sounding like Wade Keller here?

Is Dustin Rhodes starting to look like his papa--from the back? Slap some polka dots on the Son of Loins' trunks and I could have been fooled momentarily. Is it me, or did two of the first three matches begin during commercials? (Jeez, now I'm beginning to sound like the guy who used to be Ron Lemieux!)

Commercials

Not that it might not be a bad idea, showing commercials instead of ring entrances during the first few seconds of matches, since some of the commercials aired during this CLASH were swollen with redeeming social value. Like my favorite commercial, the whacky spot for *Sonic 3*, the home video game, which comes out on Hedge Hog Day. (Man, unless it's a former Hollywood Blond or a fake colonel from Mempho camping it up, nothing makes me laugh more than a cute little ground hog peeking out of his burrow when suddenly he gets crushed by a two-ton object falling from the sky and then--Whoops, there it is! HA-HA-HA-HA! The little fur

ball says, "SEGA!!!") Only problem is, I enjoy seeing the ring entrances by Lord Steven Regal. Was there actually a match between Rhodes and Regal?

"Stupid!"

I recall Sir William Dundee and The Lord spending a lot of time outside the ring conferring repeatedly outside the ring over a small pocket watch outside the ring, probably wondering--outside the ring!--how many minutes were either left in the time limit match (Arn't they all time limit matches?) or until February 2, when *Sonic 3* comes out. (Does it smell like a Lumber Jack match is in the offing...to keep The Lord in the ring where he belongs? Don't bet on it. WCW might have a new booking committee, but I'll bet they forget.)

Odd, that Heenan would call Dustin Rhodes "stupid" several times before the end of a match in which, with only ten seconds remaining, and with the time-keeper counting down, Stupid (instead of going for the DDT or Brain Buster or what ever he calls the Bull Dog) uses up seven seconds signaling to the crowd that he's gonna "do it", and then he does a poor imitation of a wrestler really caring that he didn't get he didn't get the pin (We're talking bush, here!) when the bell rings and he only gets a one count. You got it right, Brain. Stupid. It looked stupid. (*) Regal's facial expressions saved this one from being a DUD. The screw-job time limit ending was a DUD, too, because time limit matches are only good for big matches that last an hour and mean something. (Jeez. Now I really am sounding like Meltzer. It's catching. Like a freaking disease.)

Pimple with Lips?

Was Okerlund's guest, musician-singer Aaron Neville, well-informed about WCW grappling, or what?! He answered Mean's questions as if he knew the Q&A ahead of time! Wouldn't it have been great if Neville just turned to Okerlund and said, "Hey, you bald-headed

little pimple with lips! I don't know the first thing about rasslin' or this chicken shit WCW outfit! I'm only here because the cash I'm getting is green and/or the plug I'm making for myself and my career is free! And no, I don't give a rat's ass who wins the upcoming match between the Nasty Boys and those two oogly guys who were born having baaaaad hair days!" Now, THAT would be refreshing.

SUSHI NEWS FLASH!

Atlanta, GA -- Rumor has it that Sid Vicious, Lorena Bobbitt, Tonya Harding, and Molly Hatchet will form a four-person tag-team that will be available for independent bookings.

Billed as the "Wild & Crazy Whackers", their speciality will be shoot matches in promotions where foreign objects are not discouraged.

According to spokesperson Vicious, "The hot tags will go to me; Molly will administer blading (the hardway!), Tonya will do the old Jim Duggan routine, but with a crowbar, and, of course, Little Lorena will perform our 'finishing' move."

Jack & Maxx?

Did Cactus Jack and Maxx' Payne do anything for you? As a tag-team? Other than make you wonder if there really is a God in Heaven?

You know. Like, why is there life? Does the universe really keep going and going and never end? Does Dave Meltzer dream about wrestling in his sleep? What does Missy Hyatt smell like? And why were Jack and Maxx partners?

The way the match was started, with Missy and the Nasties coming out first, and yelling at the curtains for five minutes during a commercial break for Jack and Maxx to come out, made me think that maybe they should have played the music from "Where in the World is Carmen San Diego?" Big run in? (Big yawn.) Pretty good (**) match, though, with the scariest dangerous move of the

night being when Jack double-clotheslined both the Nasties over the top ropes onto the floor. Think about that one for a minute...

'Air Cactus'

...You weigh about 270 and you are flying through the air, your arms are hooked around the necks of two guys who are more worried about how they are going to survive the bump, you're body starts to summersault forward and downward, you're wondering if your midrift or knees or boots are going to clear the ropes or somehow get tangled up causing you to pitch or yaw just enough out of line, and then, once all three of you are tumbling over, in mid-air, you're hoping none of the other guys will grab hold of your arms so that your hands will be free to adjust yourself during the last nanosecond of the plummet to earth so that you don't strike your head on the edge of the ring apron, or worse, miss landing with the upper part of your back and shoulders on the ring apron and crash head first onto the concrete floor with a quarter ton of opponants driving your neck bones and spinal column either through the top of your head or out your ass.

Wonder if Jack and Jerry and Brian practiced that move, until they got it down, or if they only talked about it in the locker room before the match. Now that I think about it, how dangerous it was, it is probably the most dangerous move I've seen in a decade because, unlike, a Lucha guy or Jushin Liger doing one of their F-14 fighter plane-like barrel roll-dives over the top rope into the concession stand, Jack's double-clothesline over the top onto the floor, requires incredible timing, faith in two other guys to do their part during all phases of the move, and probably a million things that could go wrong because of all the bodies, and ropes, and ring arpon involved. Sure, Heavy Metal's moonsault over the ring post into waiting arms, might look more spetacular, and certainly a move like that is rife with dangerous opportunity, but we

are only talking about one, lithe, yong guy here doing a very dangerous Olympics-like gymnastic move with not much really to get in the way (except a few serious things that could go wrong) as compared to the insane flight plan for the Jack-Nasty Boys double-clothesline over the top. Jack & Payne won, but who cared? Not exactly a feud with the interest of a Hart vs. Hart affair. Now, when you put someone like Kevin Sullivan into this picture, to reportedly go against Jack, the "caring-to-not caring" ratio sky-rockets faster than Tonya Harding skating down the River Styx on a cold day. Jack vs Sully? Ahhhhh, makes my skin crawl.

Did you get all that? There'll be a quiz at the end...

More Commercials

Actually, I don't mind commercials during CLASHES. During a PPV, without commercials, it's like you've spent your \$25-\$30, and you feel guilty if if you go to the refridgerator or sneek out of the room for a quick leak. With CLASHES, you know there's going to be plenty of 3-minute or more commercial breaks, so no sweat. Only, I find I enjoy most of the commercials on the CLASHES. Somehow, while watching them during a CLASH, I'm looking at them from a different, more festive perspective.

'Skinny' Ventura

For instance, the Ace Ventura: Pet Detective movie commercial. Maybe I've been living too long under a wrestling-shaped mushroom and spending too much time watching PBS Mysteries, but Jim Carey (from LIVING COLOR) is a funny dude who I have not seen enough of. Stunning Steve could take lessons.

The part where Carey comes out of the men's room after he apparently has been attacked by the shark from the movie JAWS, and he stands there fanning the air (like Jerry Lawler when he finds a "gift" in his gym bag) and tells everyone not to go in there, makes me want to delay the

publication of this guppie a day or so and go see the sneak preview tonight.

Actually the *Game Genie* spots suck, but if you look close, doesn't the outline of the "genie" sort of remind you of Hulk Hogan? Amazing how pro wrestling-related thoughts and mat-related hallucinations can take place anywhere, anytime, and during real life situations like during *Game Genie* commercials. Maybe not all commercials during the CLASH are riveting. It's really sad to see what the new TWIX commercials have become: a guy sitting on a sofa getting kissed and felt up by a pair of non-babes old enough to be his grandmothers.

Sort of like watching a wrestler who is years past his prime and he won't hang it up. Itchy, you know? Yes, the new TWIX commercials are mere shadows of the original TWIX ad which won the first annual Pro Wrestling Sushi Wrestling Show Advertiser of the Year award.

Spot of the Year

Yep, Sushi's pick for it's annual "Wrestling Commercial of the Year" is SEGA's *Sonic 3* spots where the ground hog does a version of Joe Montana getting his brains scrambled during the Chiefs vs. Bills NFL play-off game, ala the annual February 2nd Ground Hog Day event, and movie of the same name starring Bill Murray.

Strange but True

Strange, that WCW won't let Missy Hyatt pose nude in PLAYBOY because of all the moral terpidude fears, but they will let her turn to the crowd at ringside and expose her to guys yelling to her face that she is a "c--k s--king dog l--king whore!" We live in strange times, Sushigansters. Very strange, indeed. You know that ad where Dennis Hopper sneaks into the NFL locker room and sniffs those Nike's and acts like he's just tooted a pair of panties worn by my vote for screen goddess of the year, Madeline Stowe? Like to see what he'd say after sneaking into a WWF locker room and sniffing the contents of Lawler's

gym bag after, say, some of the boys had their little fun. "SEGA!!!"

A Long Plug?

Interesting how the entire CLASH was really just one long commercial build-up for the special two-and-a-half hour WCW Saturday Night show on Saturday 1/29. They've promoted future events and hot-lines and the like before this, but I don't recall when a major show was used to promote regular programming. Smart, if you want to use the major show to attract casual fans and get them and regular fans to tune in to the Saturday show to boost your ratings or because you've got an even bigger angle set up for a follow-up show down the road. But it's not gonna make much sense if, when everyone tunes into the Saturday show, it's just the same old business and a half-hour longer at that.

Fry'n Brian

"Hey, ma, loogie here, loogie here what I got!"

"Calm down son. Calm down!"

"Loogie here, mom!"

"What is it boy? What is it you gots wrapped up in thet greezy ol' naptkin?"

"What's it loog like, ma? What's it loog like?"

"...A chicken bone?!"

"Yes'm."

"You go to a pro rasslin' match and instead o' bringing me home a Nasty Boy's T-shirt, yo' bring me home a chicken bone with a bit o' meat still attached to it?"

"Yes'm. Fly'n Brian touched it!"

"Why, uh, thank you, son. It's mydee thoughtful of yuh."

Somehow, didn't you just know someone was going to run into the arena during this CLASH carrying a box of Kentucky Fried Chicken!

Second best move of the night was when Fly'n Brian ran into the ring and tossed a fist full of KFC into the crowd and, on TV, anyway, it did not look like any of it was thrown back at him.

The match highlight, of course, was when The Boss (man)

and Rob Parker's second, Steve Austin, got into it and Pillman was chasing Parker all over the ring area. I gained new respect and appreciation for Parker, as a wrestling talent, who worked his butt off and looked in pretty good shape for someone who must be in his mid-late 50's. Pillman won the match as well as the opportunity to stuff Parker's head into the chicken hood. (***)

'Deadly' Moves

During the Vader-Rude vs. Flair-Sting tag-team elimination match, when Rick put his hands on the back of his head and did his pattered belly-dancer like pelvic thrusts to taunt Sting (or turn him on) and then after Sting returned the favor, did anyone else get up off their sofa to see if they, too, could do that particular pro wrestling move? I did. Pretty good, too. Better than Sting's version. Alas, if only the pythons were larger and if only I could do a decent drop kick, workout 3-hours a day, paint my face (and not scare the neighbors), and be able to yell, "Ya-hoo!" at the top of my lungs without stripping the mucus membranes inside my throat.

Ghost in the Match

Flair was in the match, but it was like he was a ghost, not really there. I'm sure The Observer will figure some reason for his lackluster performance in the beginning of the match. His punches on Vader looked really light. Okay. Vader wasn't selling them. But even if the guy wasn't selling, Flairs blows should have looked more realistic. Flair looked like he was performing in a backyard-like wrestling film, whereas Sting's blows on Vader were convincing, solid. As for Vader? His punches, those slow, measured, deliberate, well-aimed explosions were brutal. They looked like bombs going off each time one was thrown. A surgeon at work. Pick a spot on the anatomy and, well, just pummel it 'til it becomes mush!

'Gifted?'

Is Rude on the sauce, or is he just full of genetically gifted

juices? His arms, when wrapped around Stinger, looked as big as Sting's waist.

Loved the camera shot of Flair flat on his back where Vader had slammed him, with Flair scooting closer to the corner so he could be in position prior to Vader's climbing the corner ropes for his big move. The way Flair was scooting across the ring it looked like he had ants in his pants, either that, or his trunks were giving him a major Melvin or Willy! C'mon, Flair. Finally, after Vader hit the spash, and then later, when he and Flair climbed to the top where Vader gave Flair a hell of a suplex, the person who really sold it best was referee Randy Anderson who, when the ring bounced, sprung into the air like he'd stepped on a land mine. One amazing move, though. I'm always amazed when wrestlers do this move and they don't slip more often. Talk about trusting your fellow worker. Talk about trusting the guy who puts up the ring ropes and turn-buckles!

Nick's Role?

Nick Bockwinkle's getting between the chair in Vader's hand and the head of Ric Flair which is what the chair was meant for, I dunno. Something about Bockwinkle injecting himself into the match does not sit well with me. How do they then explain it in future matches when, as sure as God makes little green apples, Vader picks up a chair and ol' Nick ain't around to save the other wrestler's IQ.

Instead of John Madden being signed to do color for the Fox Network's new NFL football schedule next season, they should have signed Bobby Heenan. For my money, John Madden and Pat Summerall have been around too long and, I don't get the feeling they prep as well as many of the other sports announce jocks do. During one of the NFL play-off games when they were on, I turned the sound off and listened to the play-by-play on radio. Heenan, who was soft during the first part of the show, did his best job of the night during this match. I did

not miss Ventura. Sting pinning Rude to win this (**1/2) match was a bit anti-climatic once Flair and Vader were eliminated. And, in truth, there was nothing in the bout that would make me--if I were a casual mark--rush to the phone and order the 2/20 SUPERBRAWL. I guess I'm just one of those wrestling fans who likes his wrestling action full of Broadway type dramatics and soap opera story lines, which the WWF's big show only five days earlier served up in magnanimous doses.

Old Habits Die Hard

Anyone who thinks this newsletter is simply a vehicle for this editor to cruelly and intentionally make fun of people or to really try and hurt peoples' feelings does not understand the purpose of satire, has lost their funny bone, and, most importantly, does not know this editor.

Yes, in the past, this sheet has bashed, kidded, teased, and hammered a lot of people, including Dave Meltzer, editor of the Observer, but no matter how we here in Sushiland really feel about Meltzer (Hey, he's a gifted writer, a knowledgeable fan, a force in the industry, and a basically down to earth decent human being who'd never kick a dog, unless it looked at him funny) or anyone else for that matter, the editor of this sheet is not out to destroy, humiliate, or depress anyone. Hey, like Bastian Booger, Junk Yard Dog, and even poor poor poor Bob Backlund, we are only trying to do our best with the limited skills and brains we've got in order to entertain and amuse you. We are not trying to make anyone feel bad, and, for crying out loud, we are not performing brain surgery!

Jeez, people.

It's just wrestling.

Maybe, from here on, we should try being a little kinder.

A little more gentle.

A little less scathing.

Or, to quote Brother Sting, a

little less "C-R-A-Z-Y!"

Maybe.

It's gonna be difficult.

It might, in fact, be downright impossible!

I mean, like how does a zebra change its spots? Paint stripes over them? Underneath, you've still got--HMMMMMMMM--you've still got a zebra. Or is it a leopard?

Talking about "it," it brings to mind something that Bastian Booger left on the locker room floor at that Carbondale, PA high school where the WWF held a recent TV taping that made Principal Paul Kaczmarcik go so ballistic.

Paul Paul Paul. We are talking about pro wrestlers here. Not brain surgeons! Brain surgeons don't do frankenstiners and then go and crap on the floor where they work.

Anyway, Paul, are you sure the WWF wrestlers did all that damage to the school's cafeteria and locker room? After all, we are talking about a place that passes through it portals several hundred teenagers a day who are not strangers to drinking whiskey and leaving empty bottles and turds behind and trashing school restrooms and locker bays. Unless, of course, if any of those Samoan Head Shrinkers were on the card--talking about chicken bones strewn all over the place!--well, Samu, Fatu, and Afa are not exactly known for their social skills or dining etiquette.

But getting back to Sushi becoming kinder and more gentle. This may take some practice. For instance. In the 1/24 issue of the Observer, Dave Meltzer began the issue with the following words of concern:

"Before starting, I hope everyone is okay after the weekend of terrible weather in much of the United States and the earthquake that hit the Los Angeles area. Special best wishes to Dan Ferren, whose residence was right on the epicenter in Northridge."

Okay.

How could Sushi poke fun at something as nice as that?

To do so would be inhuman. Cheap.

Vulgar.

But in order to be a nice, warm, friendly little sheet, should Sushi overlook that Dave f-a-i-l-e-d to mention that Dan Ferren is a budding Luche Libra wrestler who, as fate would have it, was sitting on the commode taking an early morning dump when the Quake of '94 hit, and that it knocked Dan several feet into the air where he did a four-star "quebradra" into the bathtub, a dangerous Mexican move he has attempted in the ring many times before, but has never been able to successfully perform? Why wouldn't Dave mention this? Beats me.

Instead of wishing Dan Ferren "special best wishes," we here at Sushiland want to congratulate Dan for his awesome move! (Of course, if during the quake Dan suffered serious injury, or any of his family members were hurt, or if Dan's house slid down a hill, or if his collection of Mexican wrestling masks was in anyway destroyed, we want to offer Dan our special best wishes, too. 'Course, after reading Dave's mention of Dan, all we really know is that Dan lives on the quake's epicenter, which is sort of like telling us that a guy was hanging out directly under the first atomic bomb tested during Wold War II but not saying what happened to him.)

See? It's very difficult for a leopard to change its stripes. Uh, spots! Most people, when they read that opening paragraph by Dave, well, they probably thought, "Oh, yeah. Nice. Cool. Dave Meltzer worried about some subscriber whose mailbox sits on ground zero. Yeah. Tough. Jeez. There are some things in this life worth more than pro wrestling and pro wrestling sheets." Sure. We here in Sushiland are capable of thinking thoughts like this, too. We're not totally callused. The trouble is, the thinking doesn't stop there.

Like, when Dave Meltzer didn't say anything more than

that brief mention (like, was Dan Ferren home when the quake hit? Was Dan hurt? Did Dan's home fall into the Pacific Ocean? Did Dan have quake insurance? Is a fellow hardcore now living in a yurt out in the park, forced to eat \$70 pizzas? Did Dave send Dan a couple hundred bucks to tide him over?) our minds here in Sushiland begins to drift. And we think: "What if?" What if ol' Dan Ferren was sitting on the crapper when the San Andreas fault tried to shove the entire western continental shelf of the United States up his ass? Is it our fault that our minds run amuck like this? Or could Dave simply be a bit more specific, a bit more thorough when he begins an issue of the Observer with earthquake and weather reports? I know. I know.

Picky, picky, picky!

Tacky-tacky-tacky!

Pukey pukey pukey!

By the way, I really do hope everyone is okay after suffering all the cold weather, earthquake after-shocks, beer headaches and Cheetos hangovers from all the NFL post season games, and the major screw-job endings (and near screw-job endings) that took place at the WWF's Royal Rumble on 1/22 in Providence, Rhode Island.

On a more serious note, "special best wishes" to Sushi's Underrated & Most Screwed-Over Wrestling "Brudder of the Year" award winner, Owen Hart, whose dreams of holding a WWF title were incredulously dashed on 1/22, thanks to the despicable selfishness of his brother Bret who, with a bum left leg, went for the sharpshooter himself and wouldn't tag out. We know how you feel, Rocket. We know how you feel.

But enough of this "personal vendetta crappola", eh, Owen? It's time to **r-r-r-r-r-rumble!** (Oops, sorry Dan!)

* * *

Before sharing our own final word on the ROYAL RUMBLE, the following contains a letter we sent to Dave Meltzer along with a copy of Sushi's special 18-page "MELTZER" issue.

6

Dear Dave,

Glad to hear you survived your bout with appendicitis, and that when push came to shove, you made the right decision (when it came to "life" versus "moonsaults") by not getting on the plane to Japan. Hope the follow-up surgery is the cake-walk you anticipate it to be. Over the years I've had several bouts with pneumonia and while it is nothing like what you went through, being sick in bed for a long period is the pits.

At the time this letter is being written, I don't know whether you and I will have had a chance to talk before or after you get this, but if you've seen the comments Ron Lemieux made in CHAIRSHOTS (#16) about Lano, me, and the "bogus" Carlos Rey letter which you printed in the 9/13 Observer, for the record, I had nothing to do with the letter nor did I have anything to do with any of the other letters which also discussed John Arezzi and which also appeared in that week's Observer.

Aside from a few joke letters which members of the "Mullins Family" (Jubie Jay, Riki-Jack, etc.) have written to you over the years, which you've never printed, I have never sent you a bogus letter, bogus fax, bogus package, bogus post card, bogus telegram, or bogus anything, nor have I ever made a bogus phone call to you. Never.

As for the bogus letters about Arezzi, if you could shed some light on how this rumor that discredits me got started (or how things became misinterpreted) please let me know. I've been told that you and two others cooked up the story about Mike Lano and me doing the bogus letter(s) and that you started spreading it around, which a part of me does not want to believe, but, because of how our own relationship seems to have deteriorated over the past couple years, I'm not so sure. Hopefully, this is just one of those unfortunate things that tend to occur between people when there happen to exist heat-making differences between them.

On that note, Dave, maybe its time you and I get together and find out what we still have in common and/or where we can agree to disagree without being disagreeable. And if there are some personal issues you have with me (or vice versa), maybe we can resolve them.

I've already established in my year-end issue of Sushi that talking to you first, before I write anything--if anything at all if most of the friction between us get resolved--about what has gone down between you and me behind the scenes over the past couple years, is my preference.

Aside from a couple of minor personal things I'm sure we can clear up just by talking about them, I've also got some other matters about the Observer, the underground, wrestling, and your relationships with certain people in the business (and no doubt I'll have some other questions from my own readers) that I'd like to cover with you when your health returns and when your schedule permits sometime before or after your appendix operation.

One thing I think you will have to accept, though (as you can see from the sample of comments which were published in "balance" in my own year-ender), is that down deep 98% of Sushi's readers have a genuine appreciation and affection for you and for how you and your work has impacted their lives and enjoyment of wrestling (for better or worse). You may profess not to want limelight, and in actuality maybe you really don't, but many hardcores are interested in you and what's going on about you. There is nothing wrong with this interest, since you are a celebrity, a status some people have and learn to live with as a part of their chosen life style or career.

7

Sometimes, I think a lot of hardcores out there think that because you and I live so close, I'm a person who automatically will know a lot about you. As you know, I've always respected the proximity between us, and (unlike Jubie Jay and others who call or fax you constantly) I have never bugged you or invaded your space. Infact, you have actually called me more often than I have called you, primarily because I've wanted to guarantee you your space and privacy and never wanted to take advantage of our early friendship or the fact that you lived so close by.

But just because Sushi does a lot of stuff about you, does that qualify me as being someone who should be discounted or discredited in the wrestling underground, so much so, that you would come to believe, as you suggested in Jim Thompson's letter appearing in the last issue of Sushi, that I attended a wrestling card simply to watch you? Like I tried to convey in the satire that mimicked Thompson's letter, after all that you have written about Vince McMahon, one could also wonder similar things about you and Vince. But you know that that is so much horse crap, as you also know that it's horse crap for you to think of me in that way, too. And I think you know it.

Like I said, I'd like for us to talk and move beyond any petty differences or misunderstandings that may exist between us. I mean, if real nations can break the bread of peace with each other inspite of real differences which have spanned centuries of legit "heat" between them, surely two newsletter editors who cover a fake sport can set aside any animosity that might exist to at least talk things out.

Anyway, a major reason, for this letter and the large envelope in which it comes, is this (sort of) document, tribute, "hit-piece," toast, roast or whatever you want to call it which some "friends" of Sushi (and the Observer) helped us Sushilanders put together as a Xmas present (turned "get well" gift) for The Man! The Myth! The Brudder? known as Dave Meltzer.

While I'm sure there are some things within it's 18-pages that you will disagree with (you know our number and address), there's also a lot in it that say's thanks for doing what you do have done over the years.

Dave, sincere best wishes for a speedy return to full weight, strength, and stamina!

Jeff Mullins
& the Gang from Sushiland

P.S.: Jubie Jay wants to know what role ICO-PRO will play in your recovery and in the restoration of your pythons?! Excuse me, Dave. Jubie Jay is being asked to go outside and play "Lucha Libre" in the street with his friends. Jubie Jay is putting on his "Love Machine" USA-jacket, Perro Aguayo "fuzzboots," and "Blue Panther" mask. Jubie Jay is now leaving the building. Dave, have you ever thought of becoming a "Big Brother?" Or adopting a little kid who's taken one vitamin, said one prayer, watched one PPV, and read one wrestling newsletter too many? I may have just such a child for loan! Or trade!! Or sale!!! Seriously, think about it. Wait, just a sec. Jubie Jay is returning to the building. Jubie Jay wants to know if he can publish a yearbook for you? He wants to call it DAVE'S TWO WEEKS IN A HOSPITAL BED & WHY HULK HOGAN NEVER DROPPED BY! He wants to know the "Top Ten" things you plan to do with your appendix once they've finally removed the damn thing? Dave? Should I nail him with a 2x4? Or do you want to come over and tope him?!--JDM

The Final Word!

Royal Rumbblings!

Well, for those of you who saw the ROYAL RUMBLE and vehemently voted "thumbs down" in the *Observer's* post-match poll, you might want to skip this section, cancel your subscription, or throw a fit.

Had I voted, I would have given the 1/22 RUMBLE from Providence, Rhode Island a strong thumbs up, as I felt it was the best Royal Rumble match ever, and I thought the rest of the show was a lot of fun as far as undercards go. After all, what it is, is wrestling, American style (not Japanese, not Mexican) and it certainly isn't brain (or appendix) surgery.

What's wrong, really, with a title match where one of the wrestlers seems to die inside a coffin, levitate into mid-air, go to heaven--and while on the way--promise to resurrect some day? What's wrong with this story line? I'm serious.

Unless I'm mistaken, one of the greatest stories ever told tells of this fellow who dies a much more horrible death (on a cross, with spikes driven into his hands) and later he resurrects, sort of. As far as I know, the annual re-run of that story is still packing 'em into churches all over the world, as it has for centuries. This is voodoo? Comparable to a smoking skull gimmick? (Jesus H. Christ. Maybe Ric Flair isn't the only one who should take a few months off and, well, resurrect sometime in April. A good month for resurrections, I'm told.)

Did the Yokozuna-Undertaker match make you cringe, like apparently it did for the man, who Dr. Mike Lano claims is from "Campbell-on-the-Mount", when he saw the Undertaker's "dead" body floating toward the rafters?

No, the match did not make me cringe. I'll admit, I felt sort of silly and was wondering how they were going to end the entire gimmick and transition to the next act, but I did not cringe, nor did I leap up from the sofa and

phone Dave with a thumbs down vote.

Infact, the only major cringe I had all week, was when I read what seems like a major plug Dave Meltzer awarded to John Clark's Wrestling Flyer Yearbook in the 1/31 *Observer*. At first glance, it looks like a monster plug, with Meltzer calling the Flyer one of the best underground newsletters of the year (Hmmm, wonder if Dave really does have a "top ten" list of best underground newsletters and, double-Hmmm, wonder if Hell will freeze over before Dave will publish this list, which, if such a "list" really exists, would be a resurrection of sorts.)

MELTZER'S LIST? Has a ring to it. A familiar ring.

So, here's Dave, touting the *Wrestling Flyer* yearbook containing a twelve (not five) page interview with Sid "Vicious" Eudy before he learned of Marty "Arm Anerson" Lunde's law suit over the scissors incident in England.

For anyone with brains, however, it's obvious the reason for mentioning Clark's newsletter and yearbook is for Dave to cover his butt legally so he can't be sued for plagiarism or criticized for not crediting a published source, since what he does next is write a full column (almost 10-inches of print!) summarizing the guts out of John Clark's "exclusive" interview with Sid Eudy, thus, in effect, making it unnecessary for anyone to rush right out and send \$12 bucks to John, an 18-year-old, who's address, by the way, is P.O. Box 283, Wallingford, PA 19086.

Sort of reminds me of the time Brian Tramel was publishing Rasslin Riot and he printed this amazing interview with Bobby Jagers who was in Puerto Rico when Bruiser Brody was killed and Meltzer printed the entire interview and Tramel, who also got a "plug" from Meltzer, folded his sheet shortly there after, like when after Meltzer ran the story, no where near the potential number of new subscribers contacted Tramel,

subscribers who would have turned out in much larger numbers had Meltzer simply teased, or only mentioned, but not actually run the story himself.

Yeah, I don't cringe when undertakers die and go to heaven. It seems like something an Undertaker from the Dark Side might do--speak from his coffin, rise into the air on hidden wires, promise to return. Not out of character at all. Like Meltzer's character, limiting the eventual monetary return that John Clark will make for his efforts.

Am I right? Am I wrong? Oops, am I offending anyone? Am I bashing Dave for the heck of it? Well, then why didn't Dave mention any of the other articles or yearbook's contents like the remarkable 12-page DeBiase interview and an impressive 1993 analysis of graps with extensive shoot comments from many of the biggest names in the biz (Bret Hart, Terry Funk, Tully Blanchard, Kevin Sullivan, Paul E., Steve Beverly, John Arezzi, Meltzer, Bill Eadie, and more) in the yearbook from one of the "best" underground sheets of the year?

I know. It looks like bashing, it sounds like bashing, it smells like bashing. But these things cross my mind. Like, why would Dave print most of the good parts of the Sid Eudy interview? Doesn't Dave know that it will keep some-to-many people from giving John Clark's book and sheet a try? (Why sub to another sheet for hot news, etc., when good ol' Dave will simply run it in his sheet if it's really hot?) Why can't Dave be really generous and really put the kid over by simply "mentioning" the impressiveness and importance of the Eudy piece thereby really motivating his readers to check out Clark's work? Okay, okay. I shouldn't say what's on my mind. It'll only piss off half the free world and 98% of the population of Florida.

(MELTZER'S LIST: a thousand subtle ways to put

yourself over and gently bury the competition while wearing the mantle of benevolence.)
SEGA!!!

Is it really sleazy?

What Titan is doing with its 900-line come ons? Getting marks and fools to spend money to vote for things which are already predetermined? To fork out bucks for the PPV and then not showing important events which happen incidently to the advertised matches? Yeah, it sucks. But if you don't like it, you can stop buying the shows, or you can be knucklehead and pickup the phone and make the call. Or you can publish a newsletter and bitch about it. Why, you can even go to work for a 900-line and bitch about your competitor and the way he has come up with sleazy gimmicks to get more of the discretionary dollars people spend on 900-lines (as there are only so many bucks a month people are willing to spend calling these things.)

Instead of bitching about the WWF, and calling the ROYAL RUMBLE the "sleaziest" PPV in history (notice how often the same identical words "broadway" and "sleazy" were used in the concurrent issues of the *Observer-Torch*, testimony, no doubt, to cheap evening phone rates between most of the staff of the *Torch* and Campbell-by-the-Sea, causing one to wonder, who came up first with the descriptives and analysis, and whatever happened to journalistic competition?), Meltzer could at least explain how the current WWF 900-line gimmicks are affecting the revenue of the REAL WRESTLING HOT LINE which Meltzer is associated with. And why do I feel it'll be another cold day before that happens? As long as Dave is associated with a 900-line, anything he says (whether it is true or not, about the 900-lines of Titan or WCW, or anyone else's) is compromised by this fact, and slightly, ever so slightly, it erodes, or begins to crease the years of creditability. C'mon, is

this bashing? Or am I doing my journalistic duty?

Shaving from 20 to 40 seconds off each run-in for the Royal Rumble match itself, and shortening the entire match by 15-20 minutes, made it a perfect event, the best one since its inception. I don't care what the talent pool was in the past, RR was always too long and too much like a never ending battle royal with the only real interest being who would be the "marathon man" and who would win. This abbreviated version never had a dull moment. It was great to see Diesel put over (especially in view of how he was so misued in WCW). And the ending was clever, a creatively booked finish which will last in your mind much longer than any of the previous ones. Quick! Who won the first two Rumbles and how did they defeat the second to the last man? Take it to the bank. The image of Luger and Hart cartwheeling over the top and landing on the floor at the "same time" will stick in your mind forever. Call it a screw-job ending? Sure. But it was a (****) screwjob in my book. Especially since there was a cameraman over in the corner who caught the whole thing on tape (which was never shown, but could be "resurrected" at a future date if needed.) But then I've never made it a secret how I love a good screwjob ending.

Because I could go on for an hour about how great the entire Hart vs. Hart angle has been scripted up until the weekend and Monday of the "coin toss" (now I'm not so sure, since Titan seems to be rushing it), I'll only say, this. It's the only program in wrestling today that people are thinking about. It either is (or was) the only angle where, during the week, you find (or found) yourself wondering about it, curious about what's going to happen next. (Flair's "injuries"? Wasn't this done before? I guess we'll have to wait and see.) And is Owen really a heel? Before I saw him in a promo with IRS vs Bret and Lex for Oakland, CA on 3/4, only two weeks before

WMX, his interviews for this gimmick were establishing him like he has never been put over before. He comes off really pissed and in agony about his relationship with his brother. He wanted that tag belt and he, and we, could taste it. And like he says, his brudder could have, but never did tag out. Knowing how funny grap fans can be, I wonder if many people at the house shows will go against the grain and will cheer Owen and boo Bret just because they know it'll piss someone off. We'll see.

Actually, for me, I did not care who was going to wrestle for the Heavyweight Championship of the World at WMX. The match that has interested me the most, with all the build-up to it, has been the Hart vs Hart feud. Brudder vs brudder. I wonder why?

BOOKER MULLINS

Before the weekend WWF shows and the 1/31 MONDAY NIGHT RAW "coin toss", I was overcome with an urge to pencil in my own versions of the possible outcomes of each of the possible senarios served up by Titan for WMX. I suck at this sort of stuff, so, skip it if wish.

(You still here? Okay, don't tell people who skipped this part and went on, but someone at Titan told me that the following were some of the angles they were batting around. Really! Would I kid you? If you think I'd kid you, just skip this part and go on to the end.)

Let's see now. (Hi, you still with me? You didn't skip to the end? Cool.) If Lex wins the coin toss, he wrestles Yokozuna, and Bret wrestles Owen. Bret then wrestles Lex or Yokozuna. This alternative gives us the Hart vs Hart match which will be the most anticipated match of the show, unless Undertaker is scheduled to resurrect on March 20, and "interfer" in any match which has Yokozuna in it, which means Yokozuna will lose to Lex in the first match, or if he wins the first match against Lex, it

means the Undertaker will resurrect at the end of the show and "help" Bret win the belt from Yokozuna. Undertaker doesn't really even have to "get involved." All he has to due is show up, or "resurrect" if you will, to cause Yokozuna to do that great double-take he does, and also cause Jim Cornette to vomit on the floor.

If Bret wins the coin toss, then he wrestles Yokozuna, and Lex wrestles Crush, which leaves Owen (The Shadow?) bitching and moaning for the next six weeks and plotting to somehow screwjob his brother's chances of beating Yokozuna, which, if he is successful, it means the Hart vs Hart feud grows even bigger, as Yokozuna then meets Lex in the curtain dropper.

At first blush, it seems like the first senario is the best, because it has Owen and Bret going at it. But wait. Didn't Bret swear he'd never enter the ring against his brudder? Just because Owen kicked Bret's leg out from under him after their ROYAL RUMBLE match against the tag champs Jacques and Pierre, Bret did have it coming to him and he is the kind of man to admit it and once again forgive The Shadow called Owen. And anyway, does anyone at this time really want to see Bret and Lex hook 'em up, if Lex beats Yokozuna? Not unless Lex turns heel, again. But even then, will anyone care?

By the time anyone reads this, the coin will have been flipped at the 1/31 MONDAY NIGHT RAW. And if it's the second senario, I like it because it gives us Owen bitching and crying and scheming with him causing his brudder to lose the first title match at WMX. I think this makes the first title match all the more interesting since now, instead of just another Yoko vs Bret match, the match and outcome has more suspense. Bret loses, of course (setting up a MONSTER FEUD with Owen down the road), and then Lex, after facing Crush, squares off against Yokozuna, who is somehow responsible for Lex

losing to Crush in the earlier match and is also responsible for "injuring" Lex so that he can turn Lex into rice pudding during the second title match, during which the Undertaker resurrects (as The White Angel?), floating down from the rafters (or coming out in a big standing coffin dragged to ringside by Paul Bearer) making Yokozuna go round-eyed, making the crowd pop like they are witnessing the Second Coming (at a WWF show, no less!), as a crippled Luger pins the distracted Yokozuna and wins the belt. And everyone goes home happy, except Yokozuna, fuji, and Cornette. And for the next few months, at SUMMERSLAM and THE THANKSGIVINGTRADITION (Survivor Series), we all get to see Hart vs Hart, Luger vs Crush, and Yokozuna vs the Undertaker until we are sick of it! Jeez, now I'm beginning to sound like Jeff Bowdren.

Well, the "coin" was tossed (I'll leave it to Dave or Wade to tell divulge how the sleazy dollar that Jack Tunney broadway'd into the air was gimmicked or not) and Bret meets Owen; Lex faces Yokozuna, and then Bret (or what's left of him after Owen shows us who was the "best" wrestler in the Hart Family!) meets the winner of the Yokozuna-Luger brawl on 4/20 at MSG.

Yup, one way or another, Mark Calloway returns to influence the outcome of the Yoko-Luger match, or the Yoko-Bret match, if Lex loses.

But now, for me anyway, unless Vince and Company can re-inject something that was lost when the coin turned up "heads," I'm not as keen on WMX as I was if the Owen vs Bret feud would have been teased a while longer.

But I'll still watch it, because by then, Vince and his production wizards will have cooked my brain into thinking of doing nothing else but watch it even though, now, the only mystery is whether Calloway resurrects as the Undertaker or an Angel with a red beard and big

white wings! Or...? If Calloway doesn't renew his contract...

Nah, Vince wouldn't do that. Would he? (Doink--The Herald Angel!?)

Sushi Guest Feature

Couch Potato Guide to Japanese Wrestling

by Bob Barnett

An Observer reader who hasn't seen Japanese wrestling may believe that a PhD is required in Meltzerology before pushing the play button.

Phonetically translated names, no English commentary, and Dave's glossary of exotic holds ("A double cocowa into a reverse teppanyaki!") could scare off the hardest hardcore.

Just start watching. You'll get it.

All Japan

Giant Baba's promotion. Stiff work, without gimmicks or blading.

"Sangria" flows the hardway. This looks more brutal than the shoot groups. Stan Hansen and Mitsuharu Misawa do the least jobs. Stan is especially brutal with chair shots. Misawa, Kenta Kobashi, and Toshiaki Kawada (who looks like a psycho thug) have great knowledge of holds and psychology. Dan Kroffat and Doug Furnas do jobs to the above even though they are one of the top teams in the world.

A great long match on every show.

New Japan

They save their best matches for commercial tapes, and use Tenryu--the Human Tumor Machine--as their Hulk Hogan. Jushin Liger (Keichi Yamada) is the most exciting performer, has his best matches against Pegasus (Chris Benoit) and Black Tiger (Eddy Guererro), but does jobs for bums (Kabuki?). Hiroshi Hase can carry anyone to a three-star match. Keijo Muto is solid but has not improved in the last two to three years.

My favorites are the Skinheads, about 8-10 mid-card and "never were's" who fight like a streetgang and juice like mad.

(Blades and steroids are big in New Japan.) Overall great brawls and acrobatics, but too many bums (Sasake, Hashimoto, Hercules, Inoke) make their shows inconsistent.

UWF

A shoot style group with great production values. Huge Gary Albright is a great heel with an excellent amateur background. Champion Nobuhiko Takada is a surgeon with his kicks. His matches against Albright were real dramas, but Albright's "push" seems to be stalled.

The Takada-Vader match was a real disappointment.

All Japan Women

Their shows, which now include wrestlers from all the other groups (JWP, LLPW, FMW), are usually first rate for production, non-stop circus moves (especially the Dynamite Kansai & Mayumi Ozeki vs. Manami Toyota & Yamada three straight five-star title matches) and brutality.

The "monsters" (Kansai, Kondori, Aja Kong, and bull Nakano) have more testosterone than Rick Rude.

FMW

Built solely around washed-up Atsushi Onita, who evokes the Samurai spirit against a succession of has-beens, always coming out on top. This is the "juice" and "gimmick" promotion. A snuff match is the only thing left.

Their commercial tapes have amazing production and editing, and usually Sabu as a bonus.

Wings

A minor league FMW, whose biggest stars left to work with Onita.

Rings

A "shoot group" built around Akira Maeda. The matches are so "pure" it's unwatchable.

JWP

A mirror of All Japan Women shows.

There are other minor groups (such as Michinoku Pro, and Pancrase) but tapes from the bigger named groups are those that are generally more accessible to hardcore fans,

making viewing WWF and WCW almost impossible.

[Editor's Note: Bob Barnett sells new tapes featuring highlight matches from most of the groups mentioned above for \$18 (ground shipment) and \$20 (air mail delivery). According to Bob, two new tapes, #28 (Nov-Dec) has All Japan's Tag Tournament and the Vader-Takada match, and #29 (Dec-Jan) has FMW explosives matches, crazy women, speed flying, New Japan, and Eddie Gilbert. Interested readers may contact Barnett at 3101 Fifth St., #2, Santa Monica, CA 90405.]



Got a couple messages from Ron Lemieux, the Chairshots columnist who recently 1) bashed my ass for bashing Meltzer, and 2) repeated some rumor claiming I co-wrote the "bogus" Carlos Rey letter which Meltzer printed about John Arezzi. I don't have room left in this ish to run the "for print" letter Ron sent, but if anyone wants a copy of it, send me an SASE and a note requesting it, and I'll mail it to you.

Also, got a great Potshots toon about Vince's "legal future" from Bill Kunkel in Vegas. It's a full-pager, too, but came too late to fit this ish. But it's timely, has a point, is worth seeing, and so, I'll run it in the next ish.

One of the best plugs for Sushi I've ever seen (especially its editor's courageous comments about the special "MELTZER" ish) appeared in Sheldon Goldberg's Mat Marketplace (\$2.50), P.O. Box 2371, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130-0020. Ish #17 also contains the first of a revealing two-parter about Lucha star Konnan by Dr. Mike Lano, whose writing over the past year or so just gets better and better... If it has *anything* to do with graps, and you want it, or you want to get rid of it, give Mat Marketplace a serious look.

Big thanks to all of you who wrote to Sushi with compliments about the "MELTZER" ish, and to a few of you who apparently hauled it around to some of the far-flung locker rooms where, at

least in one promotion, some pretty heady "debates" were conducted.

Thanks, too, to all of you who continue to sub to this little bucket of bait and who understand how hard it can be to balance real life with the grap fantasy stuff and that we publish "whenever" we can. Your loyalty and supportiveness, when it's deserved, is the fuel we here in Sushiland at times must call upon to spend the energy it takes. Call it friendship, I guess. (Something that went south between Ron Lemieux and me. And, yeah, I really don't feel all that good about it, losing a friend, if you want to know the truth.)

Maybe, when you come down to it, Sushi does spend too much time "bashing" Dave, etc., even when he deserves it. But what do you do when you see what you believe to be wrong, or unfair? Tell the truth, as you see it? Tell the emperor he's naked? Or say nothing? Or worse, pretend he's wearing a fine suit of clothes?

Maybe, part of it, too, is the frequency or strength behind the Meltzer "bashing." (I've really done some soul searching and waffling on this subject, Sushifolks. Even had a lengthy phone conversation about it with that editor from Miniapolis, who I called to express regrets that the nasty little 2-page "Torch-like" mini-issue we put out last year failed to recognize the exceptional job he, Wade Keller, did in being first to extensively report about the McMahon indictments. (Odd, how even Wade got bashed by me and others for doing a good job.)

Time now, for a brief hiatus for this Sports-E fan, folks. (Hey, after booking WMX, I'm pooped!) Like The Undertaker, this sheet will most likely resurrect sometime during (or after) WMX and probably no later than (dare I say it?) Easter! Whether we (or anybody else for that matter) will be wearing "wings of an angel", well, it remains to be seen. See you all, whenever!

Jeff Mullins, Sushiland, CA.